

world. But there is no liberty without basic human security. There is no freedom when armed men sweep down upon your village, raping and murdering its inhabitants. And there is no justice when the world recognizes all these terrible facts and yet does nothing.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DOMENICI. I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

FREEDOM RINGS IN IRAQ

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, this is a very pleasant and happy day for the Senator from New Mexico, and I hope for many Senators, Americans, and people who like freedom around the world.

I congratulate the President of the United States. He has had a very powerful commitment to freedom and democracy in Iraq. There has been discussion for many months about whether our mission in Iraq would work and about why we are there, but I think today we have seen the first giant step toward freedom for the wonderful Iraqi people who have suffered so long under tyranny and were made slaves, whose loved ones suffered, were enslaved, murdered, entombed, and killed. Thousands emigrated from that country. This is a great day for them, and I think they showed us that it was a real issue.

I am sure many did not believe these people would risk anything serious, including their lives, to have a chance at freedom. The President, by his strength of character and commitment against many odds, carried this issue forth to an electorate and an election, and has stayed with it until this great day when we saw grassroots freedom come alive.

This is an occasion when some might wonder whether we ought to have a free press over there observing things, especially in a war zone so to speak, but this is an occasion when it is obvious that it worked. Even skeptics who were there could not deny reality. The reality was that people, young and old, were not afraid of the threats of terrorism and risked everything for that little idea of exercising their franchise. We saw them putting up their inked finger indicating "I voted." I thought it was tremendous. For that, I am very proud that I supported the President in

this. I hope he is proud of what he has done.

I don't want anyone to think the Senator from New Mexico does not understand there are many pitfalls, and there may still be some that are difficult to overcome.

Ultimately, freedom and democracy are not the end. You have to have some kind of economic prosperity, stability, and law and order. I have said democracy and freedom do not work too well if you are hungry, if you are starving. That makes it pretty easy for people who would overturn freedom and democracy. The Iraqis are a fortunate people. They have a lot of resources. Let's hope they can develop them to the betterment of all their people.

There are three things I am thankful for today. The second is the U.S. military. We send our military to do much on behalf of the American people and to accomplish missions we think are important. This one I am sure many people looked at and said: They are just not going to be able to do it; this is not a role for American fighting men; they can't help with the voting; they can't get rid of the terrorists in sufficient numbers, even with sufficient intelligence and planning, to let an election move on. A lot of people thought that.

I submit that those who run the American military at the top, and those whose boots are on the ground and who run the machinery and equipment, are sending a signal: You asked us to do something. Give us some time and we will solve the problems and we will do it.

Didn't they do that and prove it yesterday? Did anybody think it could be so peaceful in so much of Iraq? There was so much opportunity for people to walk to the polls and not get killed, to see their neighbors going and then get sufficient strength and courage to join them because the terrorists were not there. There was some terrific plan, with the Iraqi soldiers who were getting trained, and ours, to create this safe haven, a significant safe haven. I surmise that a lot of hard work took place in the rooms where planning is done, in the evenings when people work, between our military leaders and the new budding leaders of the Iraqi military and Iraqi law enforcement.

I think the Iraqi police and military probably were invigorated by this event, and I would think that they, too, will be stronger and better for it.

Again, as I have on a number of occasions in my years as a Senator—it is going on 33, so I have seen a few victories—I have seen a few involvements where it was very difficult. I have seen the Vietnam war, seen the Korean war a little bit; I have seen great achievements and otherwise, but I think this is a rather significant indication of how our military will help us if we will help them.

I am so proud we did not get to the point where the naysayers in America made it impossible for the military to do their jobs. It was getting ever closer to that, but it did not get there. I think that is very fortunate for freedom, liberty, and the whole Middle East—a terribly important part of the world.

Then, lastly, I congratulate the Iraqi people. Many of those who did not like what was going on over there, many who voted for us to go in and changed their minds—there were 77 Senators who voted for us to do that, go in—to some who had just been against it turned and were accusatory of our President. Some called him a liar. Some said he had misled. That is for another day, another argument, which I have already made that I think clearly indicates those kinds of things were not true. There were no weapons of mass destruction, but that doesn't mean there were lies about it.

But some said the Iraqi people should have been dancing in the streets as our military marched through and went to Baghdad in such fast order, you recall, with very few lives lost in the American military, and very few Iraqis. But there was not laughter and joy and marching bands in the streets. But when the day finally came, when the people thought they were really rid of the tyranny of Saddam, they did. They did come forward with joy in the streets and hope in their eyes, feeling very satisfied with the job they were doing by going to vote.

So it is a very pleasant task for a Senator to come to the floor after having heard so much negative about that, even negative about our military leaders, and to say to them, to the Iraqi people, the President, to the American people who have supported this effort for freedom—we all have supported it with a lot of our tax dollars, along with our best men and women and a great deal of equipment and other things—Job well done. May the next set of actions that are required come forth and be as good as this for the people there in Iraq and the Middle East. I only hope that as we look at this and are rather pleased as Americans, that some of our normal and natural allies in the world who have become pointedly in opposition to what we have done and have carried it even further, to where people seem to think Americans are not their friends and they don't want to be our friends and we have qualities and attributes they don't like, I hope this sends a signal that maybe they ought to become more rational and reasonable about what we mean to each other. After all, we have been through a lot together—France, Germany, Italy, Belgium. We don't have to worry about the English. They have been with us all the way. We have been through a lot of sweat and blood in the name of freedom with those allies, to our cost in lives and to our cost in billions of dollars. It is not that they owe

us anything. But I think they might at least say they might have been wrong in this or at least maybe the American President had a reasonably good idea and how we ought to get together and hope that together we will try to make it work. I hope that is not asking too much.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VITTER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I am going to make some remarks today regarding the now unfolding debate regarding the future of Social Security in our country. I don't intend that my remarks will be the end of what I have to say about it, but only the beginning. I envision this to be a long and serious and involved discussion over the next weeks and months regarding Social Security, the future of Social Security, what we are going to do about it as a country, and what the President might be proposing also.

At the outset, let me say that Social Security is the most enduring and popular and successful Government program in our Nation's history. When Social Security was created in 1935, nearly 50 percent of seniors lived below the poverty line. Americans did not look forward to retirement; they feared it. But today, thanks to Social Security, the number of seniors living in poverty has been reduced to 10 percent, and most Americans are able to look forward to their retirement as their golden years—years to be spent enjoying their grandkids, their community, traveling, and having better health. It is an extraordinary achievement for this country to have achieved just since World War II.

Now, to understand the success of Social Security, we have to be clear about what Social Security is not. It is not a welfare program. Only those who work and pay into Social Security are eligible for its benefits. Likewise, Social Security is not an investment program. For that, we have IRAs, 401(k)s, individual development accounts, IDAs, and a vast range of private saving and investment accounts.

So if Social Security is not welfare and if it is not a retirement investment program, then what is it? Well, simply put, it is an insurance program. That is why it is called Social Security insurance. It was established in 1935 to provide benefits to workers and their families—yes, upon retirement,

disability, or death. In fact, the original name for Social Security was the Old Age Survivors and Disability Insurance Program, or OASDI, as we have come to know it.

Social Security is a social insurance program that embraces almost the entire American family. It is the highest expression of our connection and commitment to one another. It reflects our core values, our compassion, our decency, our bedrock belief that no senior, no orphan, no survivor, no person with a disability, no member of our American family will be left behind.

I talk about it in terms of our American family because I make the analogy with our own private individual families. In good times, in normal times, the individuals in our own families are independent, self-sustaining, going their separate ways, building their individual good futures. But in our own families in times of misfortune, financial crisis, old age, or death that is when individuals in the family pull together. We come together, sacrificing, if necessary, to give aid, comfort, and support to the family member who is in need.

As Americans, we all value the benefits of the free marketplace. We all believe in individual responsibility. However, we also know that sometimes markets fail. We also know sometimes people fall on hard times, through no fault of their own. Sometimes people become disabled. That is exactly why we have a social security insurance program, to provide a basic safety net for the elderly, for survivors, and for Americans with disabilities.

Social Security has a deep meaning for me and my family, and it is a story I will be telling a little bit today, and I will be enlarging upon it later, but it has to do with my family when I was young, but as it relates to a lot of families today.

I was born in 1939. My father was 54 years old when I was born. My mother was 44. When I was 10, my mother died. My father had three kids under the age of 18. My father had only an eighth grade education. He worked most of his life in the coal mines in Iowa. Not too many people know we had coal mines in Iowa. During the Depression, he worked on WPA programs. In fact, on the wall of my office I still have his WPA card to remind me from where I come.

Then during World War II, when my father was in his fifties—the coal mines pretty much shut down—he was able to work in an ordnance plant and had paid in the requisite quarters to qualify for Social Security.

So when my father reached the age of 65, which was in 1951—and I was now 11 years old—he was in bad health. He suffered from what we called miner's lung in those days. We did not call it black lung; we called it miner's lung. Basically, the most he could do was to

work odd jobs, painting houses, fixing things up, and other jobs such as that.

His total Social Security check at that time was about \$120 a month. That was the sole source of income for our family. We had no outside income. He had no savings. We owned no land. We owned no stocks. We owned no bonds. We owned nothing except the little house we had. So that \$120 a month was our total family income. We lived on that.

I relate that story because when we were young and growing up, Social Security was the only thing standing between us and welfare. We all worked as kids, even at 12, 13, 14, 15. We all had jobs, whether it was working on farms or whatever it might have been. But the fact that my father was able to get Social Security when he was 65 and he was unable to work—most people in those days were unable to work because they worked pretty hard all their lives—was what kept us together as a family.

One might say that was then and today is different. Things have not changed all that much since the 1950s. Today one out of every five seniors, 20 percent, rely on Social Security for 100 percent of their income. For two-thirds of our seniors, Social Security is the major source of income. There may be a little bit of something else. In fact, according to the publication of the Social Security Administration, in the year 2000, nearly 48 percent of American seniors would have fallen below the poverty line if they had not received Social Security. In other words, take away Social Security and we are right back to where we were in the 1940s or 1950s with nearly half of America's seniors living in poverty.

I understand that we have long term problems to deal with in the Social Security program. However, the good news is that Social Security is financially strong and will remain strong for decades to come. This year Social Security will run a surplus in the neighborhood of \$150 billion. The cumulative Social Security surplus now stands in excess of \$1.6 trillion. And guess what. Every single one of those dollars is invested in rock solid Treasury securities backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government.

What is more, according to the 2004 Social Security Trustees Report, in the year 2003, surpluses in the Social Security trust fund earned an average interest rate of 6 percent. By contrast, over the 5 years ending with 2004, money invested in a stock fund tracking the Standard & Poor's 500 Index would have lost an average of 2.4 percent per year.

Many people say that money you put into Social Security is gone; it is not there; the Government used it. When they devised Social Security they said: Yes, Social Security money has to be invested in Government securities.